The Bishop of *LINCOLN's*

SERMON

Preach'd before the

House of LORDS.

Die Veneris, 13 Decemb. 95.

IT is Ordered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled, That the Thanks of this House be Given to the Lord Bishop of *Lincoln*, for his Sermon Preached before this House, in the Abbey-Church at *Westminster*, the 11th instant; and he is hereby desired to Print and Publish the same.

Matth. Johnson, Cler. Parl.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Houſe of Lords,

AT THE

Abbey-Church of St. *Peter's Weſtminſter.*

ON

Wedneſday, the 11th of *December*, 1695.

Being the Day appointed for

A Solemn Faſt and Humiliation.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,

James, Lord Biſhop of *Lincoln.*

LONDON:

Printed for *John Everingham*, at the *Star* in *Ludgate-Street*, near the *Weſt* End of St. *Pauls*. 1695.

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A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

House of Lords.

Pſalm LXXIX, v. 9.

Which is alſo in the Hymn for this Day.

Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name; O deliver us, and purge away our Sins, for thy Names ſake.

THIS Pſalm is a Paſſionate Addreſs to God, compoſed for the People of the *Jews*, under ſome very great Suffering and Calamity; either upon the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the holy *Temple*, at the Time of the laſt Captivity of the People of *Judah*, as ſome

ſome Interpreters conceive; or the Slaughter and Devaſtation made by *Antiochus* afterwards, as others conjecture.

The Pſalm is full of mournful and melting Expreſſions; and the *Pſalmiſt*, who in the Title is ſaid to be *Aſaph*, of which Name there were more than one that were devout *Pſalmiſts*, do's in the Name of the ſuffering Nation, one while expoſtulate with God very paſſionately; another while petition very earneſtly for the Jewiſh Nation; upon whoſe account this *Pſalm* being compoſed, there are ſome Particulars in it that relate purely or principally to them; But then beſides, that theſe Particulars may be applied in parallel caſes, where any ſuch happen, to other people, there are others more general, which may ſuit the ordinary Circumſtances of any Nation, under common Evils and Calamities; of which this of the Text *I* take to be one; *Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the Glory of thy Name; O deliver us, and purge away our Sins, for thy Names ſake.* And it may ſerve not only our *Devotion* in this Nation at this time, but our *Inſtruction* alſo; and for that purpoſe *I* ſhall now uſe it.

In which there may be conſidered theſe two general parts:

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1. The Petition it ſelf, in theſe three inſtances, *Help us, O God, deliver us, and purge away our Sins.*

2. The Motive or Argument uſed, *For the Glory of thy Name, and for thy Names ſake.*

In the firſt of theſe two parts the Petition, there is a confeſſion of ſin *implied*; *Purge away our ſins*: So that here we might propoſe two Obſervations upon which to diſcourſe.

1. From the confeſſion of ſin *implied*, we might obſerve,

That it is very fit for Nations under heavy Preſſures and Calamities, to confeſs their ſins to God publickly.

2. From the Petition it ſelf (*expreſt*) we might further obſerve,

That it is very proper for *ſuch an afflicted* Nation to pray *earneſtly* to God for help and deliverance.

Then from the 2d General, the motive upon which the Petition is grounded, the *Glory of God's Name*, we may infer,

That it is proper and acceptable to God for an afflicted People to addreſs to him upon this motive, *the Glory of his Name*, or *his Names ſake*.

I ſhall not inſiſt upon either of the two Obſervations inferred from the firſt General, as being *Topicks* of Diſcourſe frequently handled upon.

upon theſe Occaſions: but I ſhall chuſe to treat only on the 2d General, and the Inference from thence.

And here I ſhall 1. Explain theſe Expreſſions of the *Name of God*, and *the Glory of his Name.*

2. I ſhall ſhew you what particular Reaſons the People of the *Jews* had to petition God upon this motive.

3. I ſhall ſhew you what general Reaſon there is that may juſtifie and encourage the uſe of this motive by other People.

4. I ſhall enquire, ſo far as we may with Reverence and Humility, upon what Occaſions, and at what Seaſons it is proper for any Nation to uſe this motive in their publick Devotions.

And laſtly, I ſhall make ſome Application to the preſent occaſion of our meeting.

Firſt, By the *Name of God*, in Scripture, is frequently to be underſtood *God himſelf* in all his Excellencies, Attributes and Perfections; and the *Glory of his Name* is the rendering thoſe Perfections conſpicuous and obſervable: So that to move God for his *Names ſake*, or the *Glory of his Name*, is to move him, that the Effects of his Divine Attributes may be made viſible and illuſtrious

ſtrious in the ſight of men, ſo as that they may be had in juſt Eſteem and Veneration.

The Attributes of God which afflicted People are prone to deſire God to exert on their behalf, are principally his Power, his Juſtice and his Mercy.

When a Nation is enfeebled in its ſtrength, when it is humbled and brought into troubles and difficulties by its Enemies, when there is no hope of Salvation, by any Outward or Viſible Aſſiſtance, then to deſire God to ſhew his Omnipotent Power, is to deſire him to glorifie and ſignalize that Attribute.

When an Enemy is Violent and Cruel, Bloody and Inſatiable, Revengeful and Irreconcilable, then to deſire God to execute his Juſt *Indignation* and *Vengeance* upon them, is to deſire him to let it be ſeen *that there is a God that Judgeth in the Earth.*

When ſuch afflicted People are ſenſible of their Sins and *Provocations*, and are humbled for them, and are reſolved to forſake them, then to deſire God to have mercy, is to deſire him to glorifie that *Attribute* of his, in which *he takes moſt delight.*

Thus theſe Attributes of God, which are his *Name*, being exerted in a ſignal and illuſtrious manner, and at a proper and ſeaſona-

ble time, are rendred Glorious and Conſpicuous in the eyes of Men.

2. I ſhall ſhew you what particular Reaſons the *Jewiſh* Nation had to petition God, to Glorify thoſe his Attributes on their behalf; And there are two eſpecially.

Firſt, As they were a Nation Selected from the reſt of the World, and made the *peculiar People* of God; for he provided that *People* of particular Laws and Inſtitutions; and governed them, not in General only, like the other Nations, as the ſupreme Rector of the World, but as their National King, who reſided amongſt them in a particular manner, having ſeveral Illuſtrious Symbols of his Preſence; as the *Ark*, the *Tabernacle*, the *Temple*, and the *Shechinah*, or viſible Brightneſs, Termed the *Glory*, which was a Conſpicuous and Awful Repreſentation of his Majeſty:

By theſe it was known, not to the *Jews* only, but to the Neighbouring *Nations* alſo, that they had a peculiar Governour, who took eſpecial care of them, and fed them, and conducted, and fought for them, and afflicted and puniſhed other Nations for their ſakes; they knew him by thoſe names of Power, *the Lord*, and *the Lord of Hoſts*,

Hosts, by which he is frequently stiled in the Records of that People.

Now this Nation being thus Politically united to God, their Soveraign, in a National Bond, they seemed to have one Common Interest; so that the Body could not suffer, but the Head must suffer with it; and therefore finding themselves under a great Pressure and Calamity, in which they thought the *Honour* and the *Name* of *God* would suffer with them, they call upon him, upon that very account, to save and deliver them; For thus they addressed to him, as concerned in their Sufferings, and as it were a *Partner* with them, in the three first verses of this *Psalm*. *O God, the Heathen are come into thine Inheritance, thy Holy Temple have they defiled, they have laid* Jerusalem *on heaps, the dead Bodies of thy Servants have they given to be meat for the Fowls of the Air, and thy Saints unto the Beasts of the Land*; where by the mention of *thine Inheritance*, thy *Holy Temple*, and *thy Servants and Saints*, It plainly appears, that they apprehended God himself to be concerned in this Deplorable and Reproachful Suffering, and that it was no little Reflection upon him, and upon the *Honour* of his *Name*.

But *Secondly* as the People of the *Jews* were *Politically* united to God, their Soveraign in a National Bond, or Covenant, So he expreſt himſelf frequently to have a particular Kindneſs for them, giving them many repeated Promiſes, of eſtabliſhing their Government, and the Succeſſion of their Kings in the Royal Line of *David*, to perpetual Generations: For when they were Impatient to have a King like their Neighbouring Nations, and deſired Soveraign Princes in a Succeſſive Line, which they had not in the time of the *Judges*; theſe being Authorized only upon Emergencys and for a Limited time, and at moſt during their own ſingle Life; And that God in Complyance with this Requeſt, appointed a King to Reign over them, who being diſobedient to his Commands, he would not eſtabliſh the Succeſſion in his Family, but found out *David his Servant*, who was more obedient and more acceptable to him, to whoſe Poſterity he Limited the Royal Succeſſion; promiſing further by *Nathan the Prophet*, that his *Houſe and Kingdom ſhould be eſtabliſhed for ever*, 2 *Sam.* 7. *Ch.* 16. *v.* This Promiſe to *David* is recited by *Ethau* the *Pſalmiſt*, in the name of God himſelf, in the 89 *Pſal.*

Psal. 3. 4. *I have made a Covenant with my Chosen, and Sworn unto* David *my Servant, thy Seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy Throne to all Generations.*

This the *Jews* understood, only Litteraly, of a Visible Temporal Throne, and a Lineal Succession of Princes, such as *David* was, to be continued to the end of the World.

But now upon the taking and sacking of *Jerusalem*, and the destruction of the *Temple* by Fire, and leading away their Kings and the Body of the People into Captivity, it seemed to them as if God had been unmindful of his Promise, the Government being subverted, and the Royal Family being in danger to be extinct in the person of *Jehojachin*; all which appears by the Complaint of the same *Psalmist*, in the name of the Captivated *Jews*, in the following part of that 89 *Psalm*, at the 38 verse. *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed*, who was one of *David*'s Issue and Succession: *Thou hast made void the Covenant of thy servant, thou hast Prophaned his Throne by casting it to the Ground.*

This sad Complaint was true in the person of *Jehojachin* first, as also in the person of his Brother

ther *Zedekiah* who ſucceeded him; and whom the *Chaldeans* took and brought to *Babylon*, killing his Sons before his eyes, and then putting them out, and carrying him away in Fetters of Braſs.

Here now the *Pſalmiſt*, and the ſuffering *Captives* thought they had a juſt Ground to Expoſtulate with God, as we read they did in the 49 *v.* of that *Pſalm*: *Lord where are thy former Loving kindneſſes, which thou ſwareſt unto* David *in thy Truth?* As if they had ſaid, is this the Stability and Duration of the Kingdom and Family of *David*, ſo frequently Promiſed, and ſo highly Celebrated? Then he adds in the next verſe: *Remember Lord the Reproach of thy Servants.* And not of us only, but of thy ſelf alſo; *Wherewith they have Blaſphemed Thee, as well as ſlandered the Footſteps of thine Anointed.*

By all that has been ſaid out of this *Pſalm*, it appears plainly that the *Pſalmiſt* and the poor Captives in whoſe name it is Compoſed, thought they had ſome Reaſon to Expoſtulate with God, as to the Promiſe he had made to the *Houſe and Kingdom of David*; In which the Honour of his Name was not a little Concern-

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ed. And ſo much for the ſecond Inquiry, what particular Reaſons the Nation of the *Jews* had, to petition God in their Extremities, for the *Honour of his Name.*

Now 3dly, we are to enquire, what general Encouragement there is, for other Nations to Addreſs to God upon the ſame motive; I ſaid, for other *Nations*, becauſe I conceive it to be a motive more proper for whole *Nations*, and Publick *Societies*, to uſe, than for particular and private Perſons.

And the Incouragement is Sufficient, in that God has upon occaſions declared by his Holy *Prophets*, that he is not a little concerned for his own *Honour*, He would have his *Name* known and publiſhed in all the World, He would have that *Honour* given to Him, which is due unto his *Name*, to all his *Names*; for he is ſtiled in Scripture by many *Names*, not only with reſpect to his *Eſſence*, and *Exiſtence*, but alſo to his ſupereminent *Attributes* and *Properties*; and he has declared that he will not ſuffer the *Honour* that is due to theſe, or any of theſe, to be given to an *Other*, for which reaſon, amongſt his other *Names*, he ſtiles himſelf, a *Jealous God*, and tho he has honoured ſome of his Creatures, *Angels*, and *Men*:

Men, with one or other of *his Names*, or ſome one Letter or Syllable of *his Names*, yet he did not therefore allow that they ſhould receive *ſuch Honour*, or *ſuch a degree of Honour* as He Himſelf requires. There are certain *Honours*, and certain *meaſures of Honour* which he has Appropriated to Himſelf; and as he is very *Jealous* leſt any of theſe ſhould be aſcribed to any Other, ſo he is willing, nay, He requires that they ſhould be performed to Him at all ſeaſonable Times, and upon all proper Occaſions. And we then *honour God*, or *his Attributes and Properties*, when we juſtly *eſteem the viſible Effects produced by them*; When we publickly divulge and declare them to others; When we take Care to have the Knowledg and Memory of them preſerved to future Ages; When we improve in our Obedience under them, And truſt and hope in God more confidently for the Experience of them.

By *theſe means the Name of God is Hallowed*, as our Saviour directs his Diſciples to pray, which He accepts, and with which He is well pleaſed: *I will get me Honour*, ſays God to *Moſes*, *upon Pharaoh and upon all his Hoſt*. This He did when He overthrew them in *the Red Sea*, in *ſo ſurpriſing and obſervable a manner*; and therefore He often put

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the people of Israel in mind of not only those that were personally preserved, but their Posterity and Succession, because his Power and his Goodness was thereby known to all the Neighbouring Nations.

I shall now proceed to the 4*th* thing propos'd; To enquire, as far as it is fit for us, upon what Occasions; and at what Seasons it may be proper for a Nation to use this Motive in their addresses to God.

We ought indeed to *Honour* God daily, and as much as we can to promote his *Honour*, and to pray that the N*ame* of God may be more and more known and exalted, in the repetitions of his Praises here on Earth, as they are repeated in Heaven by Saints and Angels; This, as I told you, our Saviour has taught us to pray for, and in the first place, before we petition for *our daily Bread.* But besides, that this ought to be our daily prayer and endeavour, there are some especial Seasons and Opportunities in which good men ought to be more earnest in their Prayers, and more Industrious in their Indeavours, for the Promoting and Vindicating *the Honour* of God; and I think I may name these two.

First, when the Existence and Providence of God is called in question, denied by some, and exposed and prophaned by others. In this case they that believe in him and worship him, ought to be concerned, and humbly to pray that he would appear signally for the Vindication of himself and his own *Honour*. Of this *the Psalmist* seems sensible in the 119 *Psal.* and at the 126 ver. *It is time for thee Lord to work*, says he, *for they have made void thy Law; To work*, that is, *to work* some extraordinary thing, to *lay to his hand*, as it is in the other English Translation; as if there was need to put to more strength than ordinary at such a time, when men did not only neglect the Law of God (for that has been usual in all Ages) but made it null and void, as far as in them lay, by denying its Authority and Obligation.

Now besides, that the Works of Creation which we see daily with our Eyes, are a sufficient evidence of the Almighty *Power* and *Wisdom* of God. There are some surprising Acts of his Providence, that many times make a more sensible Impression upon the minds of men, than the common and standing effects of his ominipotent Power.

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There are various instances by which the Providence of God is rendred signal and observable in the World, but in none so much as in the Events of War. In this God is as it were the Arbiter, it being an Appeal to him, who alone has Right and Power to decide the Contest; He being King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, from whom all Right and all Authority is derived; And therefore he oftentimes thinks fit to Interpose, in an extraordinary manner, upon this Occasion. All history, both Sacred and Prophane inform us, that there is nothing more uncertain in the view of Man, than the Issue and Success of Battles; a great deal depends upon suddain, and unforeseen, and unavoidable Accidents; occasioned many times, by Meteors and Exhalations of the Earth, which arise suddenly and spend themselves vehemently; But now all these are intirely in the hand of God, and they are ordered and conducted by his Providence. *Who bringeth forth the Clouds from the ends of the World, and sendeth forth Lightning with the Rain, and bringeth the Winds out of his Treasures*, as the *Psalmist* expresses it; and this he does to shew that he is the only supreme *Potentate*, and that he is *Wonderful amongst the Kings of the Earth.*

So then if *the Battle be not always to the ſtrong*, but as it ſeems *good to him who takes upon him to decide this great Controverſy*, what a bold Preſumption is it to *Queſtion the Providence of God in this Event*? and all that are *Good* and *Wiſe* ought to ſtand up, and Vindicate *the Honour of God*, and *the Glory of his Name*, in this and all other Human Affairs, in which the Wiſdom and the Strength of Man is but Folly and Weakneſs.

Thus the Pious King *Hezekiah* and the *Nobles of Judah* were not a little concerned when they heard *Rabſhecah* Blaſpheme the God of *Iſrael*, as if he was not able to reſiſt the *Aſſyrian* Monarch; That haughty General, who ſeemed to be a Renegado Jew, by his ſpeaking to the Jews in their own Language, was not afraid, in the Name of his New Maſter *Sennacharib*, according to the cuſtom of Renegadoes, to defy that God whom he had once worſhipped. *Thus ſaith the great King*, ſays he, *the King of* Aſſyria, *where are the Gods of the Nations round about us*? not the *Nations* only, but their *Gods*. And then he goes on Blaſpheaming the God of *Iſrael*, as if he was no better than the Gods of Wood and Stone, which he had burnt, and trampled upon; well then might *Hezekiah*, and the

the Heads of the *Tribes of Judah* complain, that *that was a day of Trouble and Rebuke and Blaſphemy*: And well might they Aſſemble themſelves ſolemnly in the *Houſe of the Lord*, and move him for the *Honour of his Name*, which the *Enemy* had ſo Blaſphemed, to Reſcue and Deliver them; for ſo it is ſaid, That *Hezekiah* Prayed thus before the Lord, 2 *Kings* 19.15,16. *O Lord God of* Iſrael, *thou art the God, thou alone; bow down thy Ear, and hear the words of* Sennacharib, *which he hath ſent to reproach the living God, and ſave us out of his hand, that all the Kings of the Earth may know, that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.*

2*dly*. Another Seaſon, when it is proper for a People to uſe this *motive to God*, is either when they themſelves or others, whom common *Humanity* and *Chriſtian Charity* oblige to commiſerate, lye under great and heavy Opreſſions; in this caſe Men may confidently apply themſelves to God, for the ſake of his *Honour* and for his *Holy Name*.

For as he is the common Father of Mankind, it is agreeable to his Will, and to his Attributes of *Juſtice* and *Compaſſion*, either to prevent *Violence* and *Oppreſſion*, or to Reſtrain and Puniſh it; He

He has made all Mankind of the same Materials, and in the same Mould, by which there lies an Obligation upon them to *mutual Tenderness and Assistance*; and he has Planted in Men an Appetite to *Union* and *Confederacy*, by which they are free and ready to be combin'd in Government for their own common Safety and Preservation; for the design and end of *Government* is *Security* and *Peace*, which is consonant to the *Will of God*, and to the *Wisdom of his Providence*.

If we allow *the Notion* of those Men who make *Government* to proceed only from *Necessity*, and from *Mutual Compact and Agreement*, and allowing also *Appetites and Inclinations* in Men to that purpose, we may reasonably thence infer, That it is very disagreeable to the Ends of Government, that they who are united for the sake of *Preservation*, should be devoured and consumed by one another; that Government should be made an Instrument of Oppression, and that one Man should ruin Millions Arbitrarily and wantonly against the stated measures of Justice, and the Bounds of Common Humanity: We cannot therefore but conceive *thus Worthily of God*, that He who has planted in *Men such Appetites of Preservation*, and allows *such Union and Confederacy*, will

will have *Compassion upon the Oppressed*; and that He will in His own Way, and in His own Time, punish the Oppressors, who do not *Rule*, but *Ravage*; who do not *feed*, but *worry* and *devour*.

Or if we rather approve the *Notion* of others, who found Government upon Divine *Institution* and *Paternal Authority*; our common Consanguinity and natural Relation will teach us, that it is unreasonable, and unnatural to destroy and prey upon one another; for tho Parents have a Superiority, not only by *Nature* but by Divine *Appointment*, and so likewise the Fathers of many Families, and great Collections and Societies of Men, it is only a Superiority in order to the Education and Discipline, and good Government of Inferiours; they have no Authority to destroy and oppress at Pleasure; for *Paternal Authority* Implies Care and Tenderness, and Love and Provision, which are inconstent with Tyranny and Cruelty, so that we may infer from this *Notion* of *Government*, that God is much displeased with those who mis-use this Fatherly Power; if it overflow its Banks, it is not a River that fructifies and Cherishes, as it slides Smoothly and Gently, but a Torrent and Inundation that Spoils

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and Conſumes all where it takes its Courſe. In this caſe God is Concerned for his own *Honour*, to Interpoſe and to Rebuke theſe ſwelling Waves; and the oppreſſed may very Properly apply themſelves to him as their *Common Father*, and humbly beg of him to deliver them from the hands of ſuch men, who are his Miniſters Indeed, but *miſuſe their Miniſtry*, and Employ it not to *help and defend*, but to *ruin and devour*.

But beſides, *that this Idea of God*, and *theſe Notions of his Government of the World*, may convince us *that it is agreeable to his Will, and for the Honour of his Juſtice, and his Fatherly Love and Compaſſion, to relieve the Injured and Oppreſſed*. He has alſo declared the ſame by *his Meſſengers and Prophets in his holy Word and Revelation*. He often makes known Himſelf under *the Stile and Character* of a *Deliverer*, a *Saviour and Helper*, and particularly of *the Oppreſſed*; a *Refuge and Defence in time of Trouble*. Theſe are *the Names of God* in Scripture, and He Delights to be *Invocated and Honoured* by theſe *Names*.

When He delivered *the Children of Iſrael* out of *the Iron Furnace*, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* terms the *Egyptian Bondage*, He is ſaid to *get him a Name*, as *the ſame Prophet* expreſſes it; *The Lord that brought them out of the Land of Egypt, out of the Houſe of Bon-*

Bondage; by *which Name* He was pleaſed to be ſtiled, and ſtiled Himſelf when He Dictated the *Ten Commandments* to His Servant *Moſes*.

And when He delivered them from *that other Captivity in Babylon*, then *He got Him a New Name* as *the ſame Prophet* deſcribes Him, ſaying of Himſelf in *Jer.* 16.14,15. *But the day is come, ſaith the Lord, that it ſhall no more be ſaid, the Lord liveth who brought up the Children of Iſrael out of the Land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth who brought up the Children of Iſrael from the Land of the North, and from all the Lands whither he had driven them.*

So agreeable is it to God to be ſtiled, and to ſtile Himſelf by Names of Deliverance, and with reſpect to *Oppreſſion particularly*; And ſo *the Pſalmiſt* frequently deſcribes Him, *Pſ.* 103. *The Lord executeth Righteouſneſs and Judgment for all that are Oppreſſed.* And in *Pſ.* 68.5. *He is a Father of the Fatherleſs, and a Judg of the Widow; who ſetteth the ſolitary in Families, and bringeth the Priſoners out of Captivity.* And in *Pſ.* 12.5. he introduces God thus ſpeaking; *For the Oppreſſion of the Poor, and for the ſighing of the Needy, now will I ariſe, ſaith the Lord, and will ſet him in ſafety from him that Puffeth at him.* Well then may the oppreſſed and the afflicted call upon God by theſe *Names*, and move him for the *Honour and*

ry of his Name, of this particular *Name* of *Deliverer* especially, to help and save them in the time of trouble.

I shall now in the last place take leave to make some Application of the whole to our selves, upon occasion of our Present Meeting.

1. Then, If Almighty God have such a Respect to the *Honour of his Name*, as to accept the Addresses that are made to him upon that motive, it is a great Incouragement to us to make use of it upon all occasions; especially upon occasion of using some extraordinary Offices of Devotion.

The *Church of England* was so sensible of this, that she prescribes it in the *Litany Office*, which is appointed to be performed Three Times in every Week: *O Lord, Arise, help us, and deliver us for thy Names sake.* And again, *Help us, and deliver us for thy Honour:* And soon after, *For the Glory of thy Name, turn from us all those Evils, that we most righteously have deserved,*

But this is most especially proper to be used upon Emergent and Extraordinary Occasions; When a *whole Nation* is assembled, to *humble themselves before God*, to confess *their sins*, to implore Pardon and Forgiveness, to deprecate *the Wrath*

and

and Vengeance of God, and to desire His Direction and Blessing upon great Occasions, and in great Straits and Difficulties; then to use this Motive, is very seasonable; for the *Honours* and *Dishonours* that are reflected upon God by *Publick Persons*, and *Publick Bodies*, affect Him most; for a whole Nation therefore, the *Prince*, the *Nobles*, and the great *Body* of the People, to apply themselves to him unanimously by Prayer and Suplication, for the *Honour* of his Great *Name*, must needs be acceptable to Him, and prevail with Him to *hear* and to *help them.*

But then while they thus affectionately implore His Mercy, for *the sake of his Honour*, they must,

In the 2d Place, *Be careful, that they do not as publickly* Dishonour *him by their Sins, as they pretend publickly to* Honour *him by their Devotions.*

All Sin, which is *the Transgression of God's Law*; tendeth to *his Dishoncur.* It is an Affront to his Authority, and to the Justice, Equity and Reasonableness of *his Laws and Government*; But *the Contempt of the Law of God* is a greater Wickedness than *the bare Violation of it*; and *the Dishonour* done to God by it, is of greater Aggravation.

If a Nation, or a considerable part of it (for it

may be, no Nation was ever ſo Univerſally Depraved) but if *the greater*, and *the moſt conſpicuous* part of it offend notoriouſly in theſe two Inſtances, of *open Tranſgreſſion* and *bold Contempt of the Law of God*, *the Honour* they do to God by publick *Faſting and Confeſſion*, is not ſo acceptable to Him, as the Diſhonour they do to *his holy Name*, by Prophanation and Defiance, is diſpleaſing and provoking.

But if, like *the Inhabitants* of the Great City *Nineveh*, they would intirely believe *the Revelation* of God, and ſincerely and univerſally humble themſelves and repent, as *they did at the Preaching of the Prophet Jonas*, no doubt but God would have Compaſſion upon them, and prevent or Revoke the Sentence of Judgment, as He did from *that City*.

But when one part of a Nation are unconcerned and Idle, and Negligently omit the time appointed for *Solemn and Publick Humiliation*; and another part Expoſe and Ridicule it; and a third, that reſort indeed to the place of *Solemnity*, yet neither Pray Affectionately, nor Hear Attentively, nor Repent Seriouſly, nor break off any Evil Cuſtom, nor forſake any one Sin, nor reſiſt any one Temptation, nor ſhow the leaſt

least Effect of Sorrow in the following part of their Lives; how can such a Nation expect that God should be favourable to them? Especially if such as these make up *the greater Number*; altho in an other Rank there may be a better sort amongst them, who attend the Offices and Ministeries of Repentance with afflicted and broken Hearts, and sincere Resolutions of Amendment of Life: The devout and serious Addresses of this little Flock, (altho God will undoubtedly accept and reward them for it), cannot attone for the Negligencies, the Hyprocrisies, the Affronts and Contempts of a far greater Number; And if the Performance of the Methods of Reconciliation cannot avail to reconcile them, what can become of such a Nation?

If this be the Case of our own Nation, it is very sad and deplorable: I do not say it is; but rather hope otherwise; but it must needs be confess'd, that we labour under this ill Indication, That our *Publick Fasts* and *Humiliations*, repeated Yearly, for several Years together, are not accompanied, and compleated with a Visible Amendment and Reformation.

Shall I instance to you in our *Vanity* and *Luxury*, in our *Intemperance* and *Uncleanness*, in our pro-

ptophane uſe of the Holy Name of God by Oaths and Imprecations, in our *Perjuries* and *Blaſphemies*, in our *Injuſtice* and *Partiality*, in our *Frauds* and *uncharitable Circumventions*, in our *Diviſions*, *Factions* and *Animoſities*? Have we not been ſo far from Reforming *theſe notorious Wickedneſſes*, notwithſtanding our *Faſtings*, *Confeſſions* and *Humiliations*, that we have Proceeded to a greater degree of Boldneſs and Confidence in committing them?

Nay further, upon theſe *Licentious Practices* ſome Men have built *Pernicious Doctrines*, and from *denying God in their Works*, are arriv'd to that Degree of Folly, not only to *deny Him in their Hearts*, but *with their Tongues*.

I might here, not improperly, mention the *Diſhonours* that are done to the Eternal Son of *God* in *his Eſſence*, in *his Doctrine*, in *his Laws and Government*, in *the Miniſters and Officers of his Kingdom*, and *the whole Chriſtian Revelation*. Theſe Practices and theſe Doctrines grow upon us Daily; They are *entertained*, *encouraged* and *propagated more and more*, to common Obſervation: And if this be our Caſe, that the *Means and Miniſtries of Repentance* have no better Effect upon us, but that we rather *grow worſe under the uſe*

of

of them, by what other means can we expect to be reconciled to *God*, and *procure his Favour and Protection?*

We have nothing to move upon our own account: If God be pleased to Save and Prosper us, it can be from no other Motive but the *Honour of his Name:* The best that we can say for our selves, is, that in our *publick Worship* we do not ascribe that *Honour* to any other which is *due to him only*; we Pray neither to *Saint* nor *Angel*; we make them neither the *Objects of our Worship*, nor use them as *Intercessors on our behalf*; this may give us some *ground of Hope.*

Besides, it's usual with *God* to concern Himself in *Opposing and Humbling Bloody, Deceitful* and *Oppressing Men:* He *delights to Defeat Proud and Presumptuous Undertakings*; to *Baffle Haughty and Insolent Names and Titles*, and *Disappoint High and Swelling Expectations:* This he Does when he Pleases, and when it is for the *Honour* of his *Name:* But the *Time and Method of doing it*, must be left to *His All-Wise Providence.*

The only thing that might encourage us to hope for it *speedily*, Would be not a *National Fast* only, but a *National Reformation.* This Humbling our selves, and *Bowing our Heads like a*

Bull

Bullruſh for a Day, will not Prevail with God, who knows the Secrets of all Hearts: But if we would *Heartily*, and *Thoroughly*, and *Univerſally Amend our Ways and our Doings*, then we might expect the *Light of God's Countenance*, and the Bleſſings of Victory, and Peace, and Safety, and Wealth, and Good Succeſs in all our Juſt and Honourable Enterpriſes; *Which God of his Mercy Grant, for the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt: To whom be aſcrib'd all Honour, and Glory, and Praiſe, now, hence forward, and for ever more.* Amen.

FINIS.

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